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SUBJECT: KOIZUMI AND ABE GET HIGH MARKS FOR UNSC  
RESOLUTION, G-8

Classified By: AMBASSADOR J. THOMAS SCHIEFFER. REASON: 1.4(B)(D)

¶1. (U) Summary. Prime Minister Koizumi and Chief Cabinet Secretary Abe have gotten high marks from most of the media

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and observers for Japan's work at the UN Security Council and G-8 Summit. The majority of the press views adoption of the UNSC resolution on North Korea as a success, and positively cites inclusion of North Korea in the G-8 discussions, despite the competing pressure of breaking events in the Middle East. Nevertheless, some managed to find fault with Japan's performance, citing "concessions on Chapter VII," as evidence Japan lacked influence in the UN. End summary.

¶2. (U) Japanese media gave top play over the weekend to passage of the North Korea resolution at the UN Security Council. The press carried separate statements by Chief Cabinet Secretary Abe and Foreign Minister Aso welcoming passage of the resolution, with Abe stressing that it met Japan's aims of achieving a binding motion that included sanctions.

¶3. (U) A majority of the press gave high marks to Japan's diplomacy, with Yomiuri in particular lauding Japan's "victory." Noting it was the first time for Japan to present a resolution and that until now Japan had been content merely to join others, Yomiuri observed that Japan had not compromised on content, only on wording. The paper praised Japan's "positive and patient diplomatic efforts," observing it was Japan's initiative that netted the resolution. Yomiuri contrasted the Koizumi Administration's efforts favorably with the non-response of the Japanese Government in the wake of the 1998 Taepodong-I launch. Mainichi took a similarly positive line on Japan's work at the UNSC.

¶4. (U) Most papers also reported on telephone calls early Sunday morning local time from the Secretary to Foreign Minister Aso and from National Security Advisor Hadley to Chief Cabinet Secretary Abe, in which NSA Hadley is quoted as saying adoption of the resolution was a "triumph for Japanese diplomacy."

¶5. (U) The lead story moved from New York to St. Petersburg on July 18, with all Japanese media reporting on the G-8 Chairman's statement that included a call for North Korea to halt its missile launches and nuclear development, and return

to the 6-Party Talks. Most papers pointed out that this was the first time for North Korea to be cited in a G-8 Chairman's statement. Under the heading "Prime Minister Koizumi Displays Leadership," the Nihon Keizai noted that, despite the emphasis on developments in the Middle East, the prime minister had managed to insert North Korea into the G-8 discussions.

16. (C) While most of the reaction in Japan was positive to developments at the UN and at the G-8 Summit, some in the media just couldn't resist the urge to find fault with the Government of Japan's performance. Asahi led the way, saying Japan's "concession" on Chapter VII demonstrated its "limited diplomatic power." And on the political side, Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) leader Ichiro Ozawa was up to no good, claiming Japan appeared to be "uninformed" about the United States' "real intentions" and, therefore, unable to exercise any influence at the UN. But Ozawa was contradicted even by a member of his own party who, on a television panel discussion, lauded Japan's success at the UN. Despite Ozawa's uninformed blather and predictably negative statements from Diet members of the near-extinct communist and socialist parties, most politicians appeared to be, at a minimum, satisfied with the Japanese Government's efforts during the past week.

17. (C) Comment: While the majority of the Japanese media reacted favorably to the UNSC resolution and G-8 Chairman's statement, there remains a strong tendency for observers in Japan to try and steal defeat from the jaws of victory. Asahi's characterization of Japan's "limited" diplomatic power and Ozawa's uninformed carping from the sidelines represent this kind of knee-jerk criticism to anything done by those in office. We, on the other hand, should be positive, recognizing Japan's work in New York and at the G-8 Summit as a solid performance that helped produced unanimous condemnation of North Korea's recent behavior.  
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